

their truth and authority. Especially if either or both of these men had any decided moral tendencies and pursuits of a kind which Christianity condemned, the friend of intellectual and moral freedom was assiduous to insinuate, that, according to the principles of reason and nature at least, it would be difficult to prove the wisdom or the necessity of some of those dictates of religion, which must, however, be admitted, be respected, because divine. Let the mind have once acquired a feeling, as if the sacred system might in some points be invalidated, and the involuntary inference would be rapidly extended to other parts, and to the whole. Nor was it long probably before this new instructor plainly avowed his own entire emancipation from a popular prejudice, to which he was kindly sorry to find a *sensible* young man still in captivity. But he had no doubt that the deductions of enlightened reason would successfully appeal to every liberal mind. And accordingly, after perhaps a few months of frequent intercourse, with the addition of two or three books, and the ready aid of all the recollected vices of pretended Christians, and pretended Christian churches, the whole venerable magnificence of revelation was annihilated. Its illuminations respecting the Divinity, its miracles, its Messiah, its authority of moral legislation, its regions of immortality and retribution, the sublime virtues and devotion of its prophets, apostles, and martyrs, together with the reasonings of so many accomplished advocates, and the credibility of history itself, were vanished all away ; while the convert, exulting in his disenchantment, felt a strange pleasure to behold nothing but a dreary train of impostures and credulity stretching over those past ages which lately

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Pride, which idolizes self, which revolts at everything that comes in the form of *dictates*, and exults to find that there is a possibility of controverting whether any dictates come from a greater than mortal source; repugnance as well to the severe and comprehensive morality of the laws reputed of divine appointment, as to the feeling of accountableness to an all-powerful Authority, that will not leave moral laws to be enforced solely by their own sanctions ; contempt of inferior men ; the attraction of a few brilliant examples ; the fashion of a class ; the ambition of showing what ability can do, and what boldness can dare—if such things as these, after all, have excited and directed the efforts of a philosophic spirit, the unbelieving philosopher must be content to acknowledge plenty of companions and rivals among little men, who are quite as cabbie of being actuated by such elevated principles as himself.